A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

The Mycophile Quarterly

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2025

29 YEARS AGO:
NAMA Annual Foray in Vermont

THE 1,001
Mushrooms Project

GATHERED
Book Review by Dr. Gordon Walker

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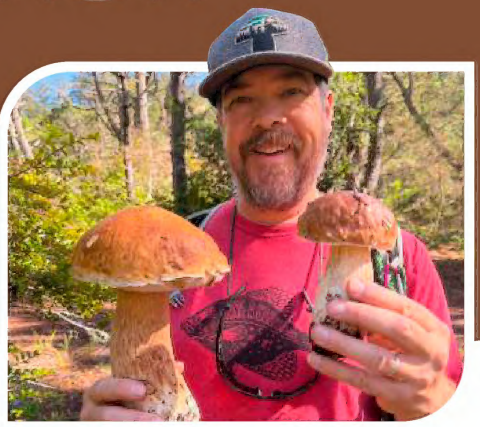
NAMA Toadstool Picker's Review

Fall is my favorite season.



Trent happily hefts homegrown porcini (photo: Kristen Blizzard).

The mushrooms explode in the Pacific Northwest following September and October rains. As I write this, Kristen and I are neck-deep in porcini, chanterelles and matsutake; I am trying to figure out which is my favorite. We always aim to have fresh chanterelles in the fridge for morning omelettes—they are so reliable and delicious! Porcini deliver a real rush when you find a few fat piggies that totally fill your basket. Boletes are easy to process and can be preserved and prepared in so many ways—we love experimenting with them.

But oh, the matsutake! Comparatively, other mushrooms in the forest feel a bit mundane. Their aroma is iconic and ineffable. Despite their appeal, they seem to be largely ignored by Americans in the kitchen. Have you ever seen this mushroom served in a restaurant? Foraging, cooking and enjoying matsutake is like belonging to a special private club. The club is open to all… but few join.

Here in the PNW, people are crazy about mushrooms! There are forays and events throughout the region in October and November. We just returned from the Yachats Mushroom Festival, a wonderful event hosted by one of our member clubs, the Lincoln County Mycological Society.

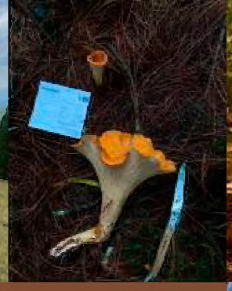
Their keynote speaker Daniel Winkler, in his own humorous style, suggested that other regions of the world embrace common names for mushrooms more than we do. I totally relate to this thought. Common names make fungi much more approachable and understandable for beginners. Many beginners attended the Yachats forays. These folks were curious about how to identify the "hedgehog" mushroom safely, not necessarily learn why *Hydnum repandum* was recently reclassified as *Hydnum olympicum* or as *Hydnum washingtonianum*.

Meanwhile, fall is also busy at NAMA. We are planning our winter Webinar series, through which we will bring you riveting lectures on all things mycological. We just wrapped NAMA New England, our 65th Annual NAMA foray in Vermont, which was a great success. The NAMA Oregon Dunes Regional Foray is right around the corner, where Kristen and I will do our best to initiate people into the matsutake club. Looking into 2026, NAMA teams are planning three more forays: British Columbia Canada in June, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in August and returning to Oaxaca, Mexico in September.

Hopefully we will see you at one of these upcoming events, either digitally or in person. Our community is open to all—and you belong here.

Trent Blizzard

Trent Blizzard
President

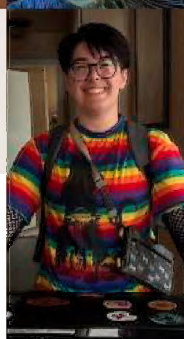
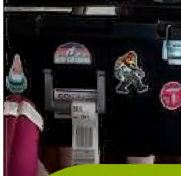


NAMA News

Learn about all the Happenings in and around NAMA.

Instagratitude!

KATHY YERICH, NAMA MARKETING COMMITTEE CHAIR

May to October is foraging season in the Midwest of the United States, where I live. Much like NAMA's Instagram account, @northamericanmyco, you have to visit your spots often to catch all of the new and interesting fungi popping up!

This summer, we virtually visited Guatemala, Mexico, Nova Scotia, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, plus Iowa, Massachusetts, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Wisconsin!

We learned about dyeing fiber with mushrooms, journaling, making paper and felting wool, photography, cultivation, identification, AND were inspired "to get kids out into our wild and green spaces and encourage them to love, respect and care for nature via the wonderful art of foraging."

INSTAGRAM ARTIST TAKEOVERS

Colorado Forest Works	@cfw_foragers
Fungi Academy	@fungiacademy
Featuring	*@jasperiuss*
Barbora Batokova	@fungiwoman
Melissa Ketelsen	@chicory_chickadee
Delaney	@delaneysnaturelog
Elise Campbell	@fullofwoolfibreart
Albany Mushroom Festival	@albanymushroomfestival
The Grizzly Forager	@thegrizzlyforager
Veronica Rosenberger	@verpaconica
Sarah DeLong-Duhon	@sarahdelongduhon
Kurt Miller	@fungi_pr
Liz's Cottage	@liz.vermillionaire
Ireri Monter	@irerimonter
Featuring	@symbiosis.funga

Our talented Instagram Manager, @oliver.p.filialuna, connects with inspiring contributors not just from North America, but from all over the planet to teach and inspire us! Thank you to everyone for further connecting and growing our mycocommunity!

Not an Instagram user? You can catch the same content on the NAMA Facebook page. We also encourage you to follow AND CONTRIBUTE to the NAMA Facebook GROUP. We look forward to seeing YOUR mushroom related content there!

My First NAMA Annual Foray Experience

ABI THOMANN, ILLINOIS MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
DR. JAMES C. CURRY FORAY TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Photos by author unless otherwise noted

Author Abi Thomann.

Vermont woodland wetland.

My name is Abi Thomann. I am a member of Illinois Mycological Association (IMA) and volunteer fungal DNA researcher for the IMA and the Field Museum in Chicago. I am also a member of the NAMA and as well as a 2025 recipient of the Dr. James C. Curry Foray Travel Scholarship.

I am writing this piece to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Curry for generously donating scholarship funds to NAMA, to NAMA for allocating them to my local club, and to IMA for selecting me to receive them. IMA not only covered my travel expenses but also my ticket to NAMA New England, including lodging, and my membership dues for NAMA this year too! By the end of that trip, my total expenses amounted to $21.27. I cannot stress enough how grateful I am for this assistance, because I wouldn't have been able to afford it otherwise. I also want to give a special shout-out to Lorinda Sues, IMA treasurer, for being my travel buddy. This was the biggest adventure of my young adulthood so far and introduced me to everyone she knew at NAMA and encouraged my spontaneous side quests. Not to mention, she drove the whole way and wouldn't allow me to pay for gas or food, so some of that scholarship money went right back to NAMA via workshops and merchandise.

Ethereally lit larva, doubtless tempting *Cordyceps*.

I had a fantastic time in Vermont. I had never been to the state before and the natural scenery was breathtaking, especially because the trees were just starting to turn fall colors. I fell in love with Potash Hill's mountainous terrain, rolling valleys and low wetlands. The old-growth forests were so quiet and clean, with far more species of lichen and moss than I can find back home. I was so happy to see fungi, plants and animals that I'd never seen before. I also learned so much about fungal identification, ecology, cultivation and taxonomy from mycology experts and veterans. My childlike curiosity and whimsy—suppressed by the daily onslaught of human atrocities, financial stress, pollution, concrete landscapes and disconnect of modern life—came out to play. For the first time in a long time I was relaxed in the present moment and communing with nature. I take that experience everywhere I go, and the inspiration has seeped into my work, my art and my future goals.

A NAMA New England fungal fascinator.

What also stood out to me was the human connection that NAMA fostered at Potash Hill. I met people from all over the continent and they were all so welcoming. I felt a sense of community and belonging that I had never experienced in such magnitude. I felt like I was contributing to a cause greater than myself by participating in the Voucher Collection Project and DNA-sequencing initiative.

This event came at just the right time because I was feeling isolated and hopeless trying to find jobs in my area of study, during this economic recession. I remember my college mentor scoffing at my interest in mycology and asking me, "Why study something so boring?" For a while I pursued biomedical research, feeling like a weirdo and an outcast the whole time. By the time I found my way back to mycology, it had already become a political target, among many other areas of research. At NAMA New England, surrounded by other mycoweirdos and struggling scientists working toward a common goal, I felt resistance, defiance and hope. I am confident I will get through these hard times because of my connection to the mycelial network stretching across the continent.

The author flanked by IMA's Lorinda Sues (left) and NAMA Secretary Susan Kayser (photo: Lorinda Sues).

My experience at the 2025 NAMA Annual Foray was life-changing and I would strongly encourage anyone who hasn't been to go! Thanks again to everyone who made it possible for me.

NAMA New England Annual Foray Scholarship Recipient Experience

VERONICA ROSENBERGER, PHILADELPHIA MYCOLOGY CLUB
2025 NAMA MARKETING COMMITTEE ANNUAL FORAY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

It's true that "mushrooms are having a moment," especially if that moment leads to mycomemories that last a lifetime.

The 2025 NAMA Annual Foray Scholarship recipients came to the right place to make those memories at NAMA New England, held in Marlboro, Vermont. It's evident after only moments talking to them that they have found their passion and purpose in the world of mycology.

We caught up with these folks post-first-NAMA-foray to find out what they brought with them to the event and what they are taking back to share their local mycelial networks; here is what they have to say!

BRENDA OUTSEN

NAMA CULINARY ARTS COMMITTEE SCHOLARSHIP

For Brenda, wild edibles sparked her fascination for fungi. One thing led to another, and this obsession landed her the NAMA Culinary Arts Committee Scholarship.

"I am the co-owner of E.B. Fungi, where we cultivate fresh gourmet mushrooms, create mushroom-based products, provide education on cultivation and identification, offer consulting services and supply freshly foraged wild mushrooms."

Outside of mushrooming, she shares, "I have the honor of homeschooling my son and enjoy traveling often to visit friends and family."

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "My favorite part of the NAMA Annual Foray was experiencing so many people coming together to contribute to the field of mycology, as well as to celebrate and share their love for mushrooms. I found it remarkable that mycologists and citizen scientists are continually discovering previously undocumented mushrooms."

BRENDEN ERICKSON

NAMA-AFFILIATED CLUB SCHOLARSHIP MEMBER, MUSHROOM SOCIETY OF UTAH

When asked what sparked his lifelong love for fungi, Brenden responds, "Mycomaterials. I am a really hands-on learner so the ability to work with mushrooms to create sustainable alternatives continues to fascinate me!"

Outside of mushrooming, he says "I love gardening. My favorite crops are gourds and tomatoes. I also love mountain biking and spending time in the Utah mountains."

Favorite New England memory: "My favorite part of the NAMA Annual Foray was the mushroom papermaking class that was put on by Roberta Tretin as well as meeting all the amazing and knowledgeable foray attendees! I also really enjoyed learning about forest health from Annabelle Langlois. I learned that you can tell the age of the forest depending on what trees are growing there, and that these trees will have mycorrhizal relationships with specific fungi."

DUANE MCCALDEN

NAMA-AFFILIATED CLUB SCHOLARSHIP
BOARD MEMBER, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

What sparked your lifelong love for fungi? "As a child I had an older neighbor who foraged mushrooms, it always seemed dangerous. He would explain about learning from his grandparents and the benefits of each one."

Outside of mushrooming: "Since I retired, I have taken up beekeeping and hiking. I enjoy the great Pacific Northwest and everything that goes with it. I enjoy harvesting the bounty of the land, both mushrooms and clams."

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "My favorite part of this event was getting to know all the people that attended and the different terrain of the various parts of the country. One fun fact that I learned was how to use iNaturalist. I plan to continue to use this app for myself and will share this knowledge with the rest of my mushroom community."

LEVI STALEY

NAMA-AFFILIATED CLUB SCHOLARSHIP
FORAY LEADER, MISSOURI MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

hat sparked your lifelong love for fungi? "I started researching *Psilocybe* mushrooms on my own and after several rabbitholes, I realized fungi are all fascinating!"

Outside of mushrooming, Levi spends "my free time playing video games but

I love being outdoors hiking or camping as well. I also enjoy writing on my fantasy novel, playing guitar and singing."

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "Finding my first earthtongue! I learned some earthtongues have little hairs (*Trichoglossum*), some are sticky (*Glutinoglossum*) and others are bald (*Geoglossum*)! I'll hopefully be able to use this to identify and teach at my next foray where we find earthtongues!"

LUCA GAGLIANO

NAMA COMMITTEE SCHOLARSHIP
NAMA-AFFILIATED OHIO MUSHROOM SOCIETY

Levi notes that what sparked his lifelong love for fungi was "Foraging for chanterelles for the first time with my cousin and uncle during the COVID lockdown and ending up bringing full buckets home to eat. Now, I'm a member of the Ohio Mushroom Society (OMS)."

Outside of mushrooming, he "loves going backpacking, kayaking, biking, and I'm a fan of video games such as *Life is Strange*, *Legend of Zelda* and *The Last of Us*. I'm also currently a student at Ohio University, where I'm creating my own major to study fungi as well as minoring in philosophy."

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "Seeing all the different diversity of mushrooms (especially the ascomycetes that came in) and getting the opportunity to meet so many awesome mycopeople. I had the amazing opportunity to learn and

help with the DNA-sequencing procedure for around 2,000 of the mushrooms brought in throughout the foray. I hope that I can bring this toothpick-DNA-extraction and higher-throughput procedure to the OMS and other forays in the area, so that more people can meaningfully make contributions to the scientific understanding of fungi just by going outside and picking mushrooms!"

MATHIAS ROCHELEAU-DUPLAIN

NAMA-AFFILIATED CLUB SCHOLARSHIP - CANADA
MYCOSPHAERA COFOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What sparked your lifelong love for fungi? "While completing an agricultural internship at the northernmost farm in Quebec, Le Grenier Boréal, located across from Anticosti Island on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River, I met Joël Caux, a naturalist guide for Parks Canada. At only 25 years old, he was already an exceptional mushroom identifier and was conducting the very first fungal surveys in the federally protected Mingan Archipelago. At that time, I knew nothing about fungi but his energy and passion deeply inspired me. We became friends and together we went on to create Mycosphaera, the first nonprofit organization in Canada dedicated to mushroom conservation."

Outside of mushrooming: "I would say that my entire life revolves around fungi. As the cofounder and Executive Director of Mycosphaera, I am constantly seeking new opportunities to grow, connect and advance this cause. When I'm not immersed in mycology, I enjoy canoeing and traveling. I especially love exploring Québec's rivers, where water is everywhere—after all, Québec has one of the highest concentrations of lakes and rivers in the world!"

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "My favorite part was spending late nights in the microscopy room with Mycota Labs and Harte Singer. While François Guay

was busy examining what is likely another new species for science (once again!) and Harte was working on sequencing. I was with Elan Trybuch, Renée Lebeuf, Joshua Birkebak, Stephen Russell and Jessica Williams, diving into fascinating conversations about deep, geeky mycology topics."

"Since Mycosphaera is preparing to launch a nanopore-sequencing campaign with the support of Génome Québec and the mycology clubs of Quebec, I was grateful for the opportunity to observe how Stephen Russell, Harte Singer and the DNAMA team structure their fungal-documentation workflow. I found the processes in the identification room and the sequencing room particularly inspiring, gaining valuable insights that could help us eventually adapt and replicate some of these protocols."

PRESLEY MARTIN

NAMA-AFFILIATED CLUB SCHOLARSHIP
MEMBER, MINNESOTA MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

What sparked Presley's lifelong love for fungi was "*Grifola frondosa*, maitake, the first mushroom I ate that really opened my eyes to the culinary possibilities of fungi beyond our usual white button mushrooms."

Outside of mushrooming, he is: "a visual artist, a Minnesota water steward and an advocate for artists with disabilities. I make drawings in my Minneapolis studio with birch polypore 'brushrooms.'"

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "I really enjoyed learning how to make paper with mushrooms. One of the best papermaking mushrooms is *Fomitopsis betulina*, the same mushroom I use for my brushrooms. I'm really interested in all the cultural uses of this mushroom. Also, I learned that *Ganoderma applanatum*, the artist bracket, can release 5 trillion spores an hour. I will share this every time we come across an artist bracket on forays."

REBECCA HODGE

NAMA-AFFILIATED CLUB SCHOLARSHIP
MEMBER, MUSHROOM CLUB OF GEORGIA

What sparked your lifelong love for fungi? Rebecca recalls that "Growing up, my family never ate mushrooms. When I studied abroad in France in 10th grade, my host family ate mushrooms all the time and I LOVED them. They were part of so many dishes, from crepes to pork roasts to pizzas. During my year abroad, I spent a lot of time bonding with my host mom over cooking. That love of mushrooms in food blossomed rapidly into a love of everything fungi as I began diving more into how and where mushrooms grow and quickly learned just how cool, unique and fascinating mushrooms are—and how much more there is to learn about them."

"Besides being a regular attendee of my local club's monthly meetings and forays, I've recently joined NAMA's DNA-Sequencing Validation Corps as a volunteer. I have also begun helping NAMA's Medicinal Mushroom Committee in their efforts to build a survey to start collecting data on mushroom use in relation to health that will hopefully improve what little we know on how mushrooms can be used in health and medicine."

Outside of mushrooming, Rebecca is "a science and data nerd. I currently work as a bioinformatics consultant by day and spend most of my free time (when I'm not doing anything mushroom-related) reading or writing, hanging out with my friends or doing artsy things like digital painting or photography."

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "I loved the UV night hike! It was absolutely fascinating to go out at night and see what and how things fluoresced at night—the bugs and plants, mushrooms and lichens, rocks and even trash."

"I'm very new to photography and I just learned about focus stacking! I love macrophotography and will definitely be trying this technique out in the future to see if I can get crisper closeups of mushrooms where all parts of the mushroom are in equal focus."

VERONICA ROSENBERGER

NAMA MARKETING COMMITTEE SCHOLARSHIP
MEMBER, NAMA-AFFILIATED PHILADELPHIA MYCOLOGY CLUB

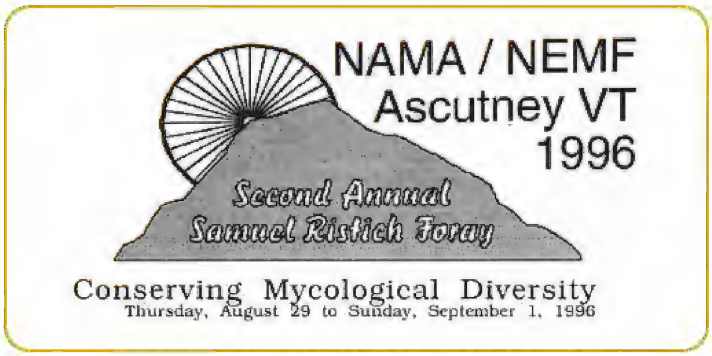
Asked what sparked her lifelong love for fungi, Veronica notes that "I almost stepped on morels in my parents' backyard in 2020, which made me ask what else can I eat? That question further provoked the question, what else can I identify? Since then, I have found community within the worlds of fungal conservation."

Outside of mushrooming: "I'm happy that the nature of my 9-to-5 job is also environmental communications for a land trust, similar to what I do in the mushroom nonprofit world. When I'm not working, I can be found in the woods with my big fuzzy dog, Mel, or enjoying culinary pursuits with my partner, Billy."

Favorite NAMA New England memory: "I learned a lot. There were a lot of 'firsts'—my first NAMA foray, my first time in Vermont. As an entomopathogenic fungi fanatic, Billy finding a huge *Cordyceps* out in Pisgah State Park, New Hampshire, was a magical moment for me. Back at Potash Hill, having ID-table-experts puzzled was wild until Renée Lebeuf recognized it to be *C. farinosa*. At that night's keynote, Andrew Wilson honored it as one of the Voucher Collection Project Finds of the Day and the mushroom was sampled for DNA as well as accessioned into the Chicago Field Museum along with hundreds of others.

29 Years Ago: the 1996 NAMA Annual Foray in Vermont

OLIVER FILIALUNA (THEY/HE), NAMA INSTAGRAM MANAGER



In advance of an in-depth story comparing the 2025 Annual NAMA foray with the group's last time in the same area, to be published in an upcoming *MQ*, please enjoy this sneak peek into the past.

29 years ago, NAMA's Annual Foray was hosted by the New Hampshire Mycological Society, Montshire Mycological Club, and the Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited under the Northeast Mycological Federation,Inc. (NEMF).

A robust list of distinguished faculty included Dr. Samuel S. Ristich, Dr. Richard L. Homola, Dr. Rick Van de Poll, Douglas E. Bassett, Dr. Alan E. Bessette, Arleen E. Bessette, Ernst E. Both, Raymond Fatto, David W. Fischer, Dr. James Ginns, Dr. John Haines, Dr. Roy E. Halling, Dr. Richard P. Korf, Yves Lamoureux, Gary H. Lincoff, Dr. Pavel Lizon, Dr. Rosalind Lowen, Dr. Donald H. Pfister, William Roody, Walter Sturgeon, Dr. Thomas Volk and Dr. C.J.K. Wang. ("Foray Faculty At-A-Glance," *The Mycophile* 37(3) 1996, pg.7-9).

An Account of The 1996 NAMA Foray

Over 400 amateurs and professionals attended the Northeast Mycological Federation (NEMF) sponsored NAMA foray in Ascutney, Vermont. The theme of the foray was Conserving Mycological Diversity, and the program was designed around this theme. There were also posters, among them one chronicling the history of NEMF, another promoting the upcoming international conference on mushroom dyes. There were workshops: identification for beginners, a workshop on Russula, and a workshop on polypores. There were lectures on *Collybia*, *Albatrellus*, the boletes, on the naming of mushrooms and many others. Some attendees opted to go on forays and attended the evening lectures only. There were socials, a round table discussion on mushroom poisoning and, the all time favorite, mycophagy. Ursula Pohl, NAMA Mycophagy Committee Chair, assisted by Larry Stickney, chef extraordinaire from California, succeeded in producing a fine array of dishes from mushrooms gathered from Vermont's forests. The tables where the mushrooms were displayed was a popular meeting place for discussions. The display of mushrooms items for sale grows every year. There was jewelry made from mushrooms, tiles with mushrooms, aprons and ties with mushrooms, paper plates and napkins with mushrooms, hats with mushrooms and shaped like mushrooms and of course t-shirts. What are these forays about? They are about fungi, collecting, and learning more about fungi. They are about meeting people from other states who share the same interests in the fungi.

From *Anna Gerenday*, appearing in *The Toadstool Review*, Vol. 21, No. 6,

The 1996 Knighton Award is presented to William and Louise Freedman.

Presentation of the 1996 Award for Contributions to Amateur Mycology. Ray Fatto was the honored recipient.

Ron Meyers, photographer

Anna Gerenday wrote an account of the event that was published first in *The Toadstool Review* 21(6) 1996 and then *The Mycophile* 37(3) 1996. In it she says, "Over 400 amateurs and professionals attended the Northeast Mycological Federation (NEMF)- sponsored NAMA foray in Ascutney, Vermont. The theme of the foray was 'Conserving Mycological Diversity' and the program was designed around this theme." Her account provides brief glimpses into the fungi seen and activities participated in during the event such as posters, workshops, forays, socials, roundtable discussions, mycophagy, mushroom-display-table discussions and an abundance of mycoitems for sale. But most importantly, Gerenday provided her perspective on the frequently pondered question, what are these forays about? "What are these forays about? They are about fungi, collecting and learning more about fungi. They are about meeting people…who share the same interests in the fungi." ("An Account of the1996 NAMA Foray," *The Mycophile* 37(6) 1996).

In the same *Mycophile* edition, the celebration of highlighted individuals continued. William and Louise Freedman were awarded the Harry and Elsie Knighton Award for Meritorious Service to Local Clubs, James E. Johnson was awarded the Intersocietal Ellen Trueblood and Mycological Society of America Award, Ray Fatto was awarded for Contributions to Amateur Mycology and Jill Carver was awarded the NAMA President's Award.

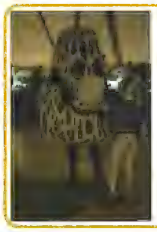
"Dyer's Delight," Judges Option, *Arleene Bessette*

Amanita muscaria var. *formosa*, Limited Pictoral, *Earl Rothberger*

"Dead Man's Foot "(*Hypomyces lactifluorum*), Judges Option, Walt Sturgeon

Amanita fulva, Open Pictoral, *Bill Roody*

Hygrophorus flavescens, Limited Documentary, *David Harris*



"You can pick your mushrooms, You can pick your nose, but you can't pick your mushroom's nose," Judges Option *Dave Mazour*

"Pores, Gills, Teeth," Judges Option, *Ken Gilberg*

Initial coverage of the 1996 NAMA Photography Contest included the first-prize recipient, "*Psilocybe thrausta**growing out of forest leaf litter," by Bill Roody, as well as six other notable entries (*The Mycophile* 37(6) 1996, pg. 6-7).

The 1996 NAMA Annual Foray was the last before the Voucher Collection Project Committee formed to oversee the Voucher Collection Project (VCP) and, unfortunately, it was one of the only years for which its species was long missing. Thanks to a generous and dedicated group of NEMF members, a better insight into the event was possible and the 1996 Annual Foray species list has been copied to the VCP records. Scans were made possible through the efforts of Dr. Andrew Wilson and Ed Lubow, who saved the late, great Marilyn Shaw's collection of mycocommunity archives at the Denver Botanic Garden.

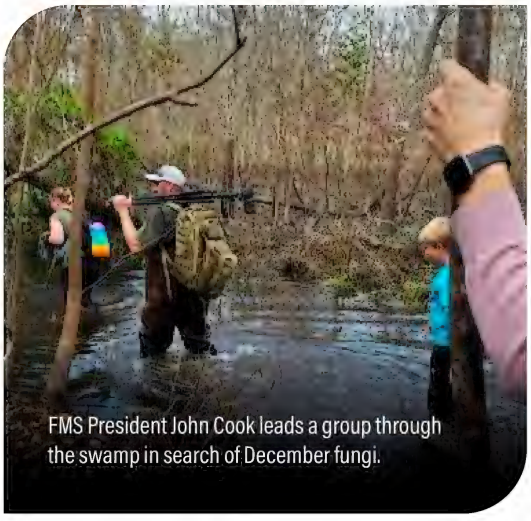
**Psilocybe thrausta* is now classified as *Leratiomyces squamosus* var. *thraustus*.

NAMA Affiliated Club Spotlight

Florida Mycological Society: Passion, Citizen Science and Native Fungi

PEGGY GREEN, NAMA FORAY REGISTRAR
PRESIDENT, MISSOURI MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY (MOMS)

The Florida Mycological Society (FMS) may be young but it's already making waves in the fungal community with its science-based mission, year-round fieldwork and impressive biodiversity initiatives. Formed in 2024 and now celebrating its first anniversary, FMS brings together a passionate and diverse membership from Central Florida's Orange, Seminole and Volusia counties and recently affiliated officially with NAMA; welcome, FMS!



FMS President John Cook leads a group through the swamp in search of December fungi.

Led by President John Cook, who works in Florida helping to combat invasive plants, and Vice President Andrew Johnson, a medicinal mushroom cultivator and farmer, the club combines scientific rigor with community engagement. Rounding out the leadership is Scott Ostuni, a skilled amateur mycologist and DNA-

FMSers mycologizing amid the palmettos.

sequencing contributor for FunDiS, who has published in NAMA's peer-reviewed journal, *McIlvainea*. What a team!

FMS hosts monthly forays—but with a twist. Due to strict Florida regulations on public land use, these outings are structured strictly as research surveys. Participants collect fungi, document them in iNaturalist and submit specimens for DNA sequencing, with John Cook overseeing submissions and analysis. These efforts are backed by individual collection permits and conducted under strict leave-no-trace principles.

Why so cautious? Florida is one of the most ecologically sensitive states in the U.S., with more invasive plant species than anywhere else in the country. "Even light disturbance can tip the balance," explains Cook. "Going off trail or removing material can create openings for invasive species." As a result, FMS takes great care to minimize environmental impact, ensuring their forays contribute to science without harming delicate ecosystems.

Initial walks are free and open to the public but continued participation requires membership. The club has obtained permissions to survey in protected areas, such as the St. Johns Water Management District and, through special collaboration, inside state parks like St. Augustine—always accompanied by park staff and conducted with conservation in mind.

Bisected *Ganoderma curtisii* found during FMS' July meetup.

FMS IS ALREADY ENGAGED IN THREE MAJOR INITIATIVES:

FLORIDA DIVERSITY PROJECT

With more than 4,600 iNaturalist observations in its first year, FMS has uncovered an astonishing array of fungi, many of which have never been DNA sequenced. The team estimates that 40% of collected specimens are not tied to known species names. Florida's unique blend of climates makes it a surprising fungal frontier.

FLORIDA NATIVE GOURMET FUNGI PROJECT

This exciting new project aims to identify native edible species and develop cultivars for local mushroom farms. Notable finds include the IUCN-Redlisted *Bresadolia paradoxa* (the "cow-stomach mushroom") and what may be native pink oyster (*Pleurotus*) strains that appear white when they fruit in the wild. The club is working to culture these rare and underutilized species to promote sustainable, local cultivation.

GANODERMA DIVERSITY & CULTIVATION STUDY

Florida is home to eight known lactate *Ganoderma* species and FMS is exploring their medicinal potential. Of special interest is *Ganoderma curtisii*, a close relative of the popular Asian medicinal species known as *G. lingzhi* ("reishi"). The team hopes to analyze triterpenoid compounds to evaluate their therapeutic uses.

In addition to its research, FMS has launched a journal entitled, *Murrillia: Southeastern Journal of Amateur Mycology*, founded and edited by John Cook, which documents the club's scientific findings and field reports.

With a commitment to research, education and ecological stewardship, the Florida Mycological Society is showing how even a small club can make a big difference. It's amazing what they have accomplished in just over a year. To learn more, check out their website: https://floridamycologicalsociety.org/.

Wild Florida *Pleurotus*; is it pink?

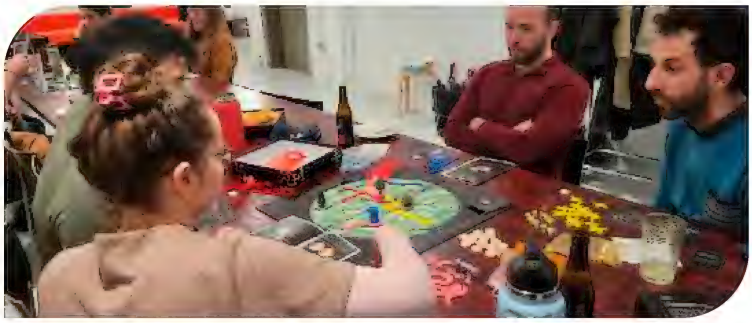
Redlisted as "Vulnerable," *Bresadolia paradoxa*, is an edible polypore found during FMS' October meetup.

Shroomscape:

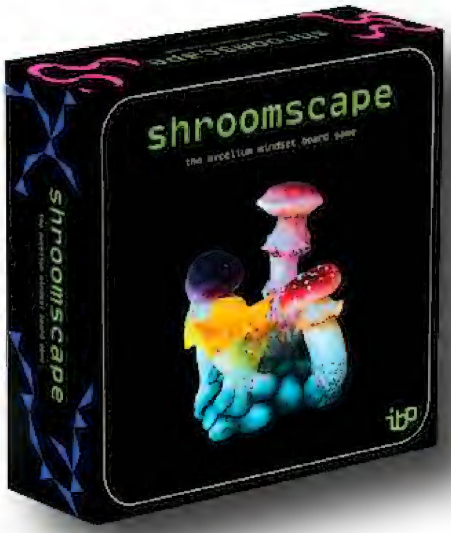
THE MYCELIUM MINDSET BOARD GAME LAUNCHES ON KICKSTARTER

NATALIE CHESTER,
THE INTERBEING
PROJECT

After years of late-night tinkering, testing and refinement, three independent designers launched their inaugural tabletop game, *Shroomscape: The Mycelium Mindset Board Game*, with Kickstarter on October 1, 2025.



Shroomscape invites players to experience the full mushroom lifecycle: growing networks underground, sprouting fruiting bodies and releasing spores that can change the entire game. Every playthrough offers an unique adventure of competition, collaboration and unpredictability, keeping sessions fresh and strategic.



The game has been tested by a wide variety of players, from mycologists and other biologists to middle school students, mushroom festival-goers and experienced boardgame designers; their feedback has shaped everything from mechanics to artwork. At its heart, *Shroomscape* celebrates the interconnectedness of ecosystems and encourages players to think cooperatively, creatively and with curiosity about the natural world.

Already fully illustrated, balanced and production-ready, *Shroomscape* is set to manufacture as soon as the Kickstarter is funded. With its polished gameplay and striking design, the game is geared toward boardgame lovers, kids, mushroom enthusiasts and anyone who enjoys an unique strategy-developing challenge.

CLICK HERE

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT AND HOP A-BOARD THE SHROOMSCAPE TRAIN!

THE ORIGIN OF DEAD MAN'S FINGERS:

Mary Ann O'Flanagan, Wisconsin Mycological Society

LAWRENCE MILLMAN, PHD

Consider the BMC (the Bygone Mycological Club), a mushroom club so old that literally every one of its members has bought the proverbial farm. Lest you think otherwise, this does not prevent club members from foraging for fungi.

They simply go foraging in their current habitat, which is beneath the ground. Since they're not governed by circadian rhythms, the weather, seasonality or 9-to-5 jobs, they can look for fungi morning, noon and night.

There is a downside (so to speak) to their foraging. Being hypogeous themselves, they tend to encounter only hypogeous species such as *Gautierias, Mesophillias* and various Phycomycetes, none of which is a decent (or even an indecent) edible.

Once in a while, a club member might encounter an *Elaphomyces* and, given their identification skills or lack thereof, they'll say something like "Wow, a Perigord truffle!" After gnawing on a specimen, they usually realize that the truffle in question isn't the sort of fare any critter besides a squirrel would eat. Likewise they realize that it's not the sort of fare Sotheby's or even Walmart would sell.

Unlike certain other mycophiles, BMCers don't forage for medicinal fungi; such fungi don't possess the necessary properties that can resurrect the dead. Nor do they search for cup fungi, crusts, resupinate polypores and the like, for why would a person perform an act in death that they wouldn't have performed in life?

Our BMC's president, who prides herself on not knowing Latin binomials, refers to all mushrooms as "guys." She utters comments like, "Chanterelles are such nice guys, why are they avoiding us?" The club's foray leader, a fellow named Addle Pate, tends to be less negative: "At least nobody is accusing us of overcollecting."

Every once in awhile, one of the club's more percipient members will realize that fungal fruiting bodies tend to occur aboveground. That individual will extend his or her hands upward, ever upward, hoping to grab a morel, porcini or maybe a matsutake. Eventually those hands rise above the ground, whereupon the fingers harden and soon turn black, thus becoming what's commonly known as dead man's fingers.

Almost nobody who sees one of these *Xylaria* species has the slightest inkling that it actually belongs to a deceased member of a mushroom club.

GOOD FIRE, BAD FIRE, Eastern Burn Morel

MARIA PINTO,
TEXT AND PHOTOS

You're with two good friends crawling up a slope on a burn-scarred bit of white pine (*Pinus strobus*) woodland in eastern Massachusetts and there's no escaping it: real tears have just welled in your eyes.

As if one overflow triggered another in your body's ecosystem, a sneeze tickles your sinuses and you turn away from your companions, who are absorbed in the task at hand, to let it fly: *ACHOOO!* Quick, an opportunity to wipe away the loosed waterworks discreetly, leaving ash the shape of warpaint on your face that you won't notice until later.

Each member of your trio has said some version of "They're perfect, they're gorgeous, this does not compute," in the last five minutes.

Having gained a bit of distance from that day, it remains indisputable that they *were* perfect, they *were* gorgeous—and it certainly *couldn't have computed*, not then. We may spend the rest of our lives unsuccessfully trying to compute it: the sheer charisma of the burn morel to an East-Coast mushroomer.

"Natural" morels, as the ones not triggered by fire are sometimes called, are a favorite of mine to talk about with forayers in the spring. We say things like "tree association but not ectomycorrhizal in nature." We say things like "endophytic habit and sclerotia and resiliency and mystery." These chats end in productive befuddlement that makes for obsessed students who *must* learn more. Imagining that befuddlement to the nth degree, I couldn't help but want to bring these forayers with me to the burn-scarred secret spot. But I didn't, of course; the location wasn't mine to share.

That scene took place in late May of this year and the cool morning my companions and I essayed into was lightly menaced by the radar's premonition

of rain clouds sailing toward us from the west. When the clouds come and do their thing, this "us"—consisting of me, soft-serve enthusiast and mushroom enjoyer, L, artist and naturalist and gentlest of souls (with hidden, metal depths), and B, photographer and adventurer and wearer of overalls—will wait them out in the lee of maples that the inferno never met, as rain saturates anything it can get its fulsome fingers on after long drought. In the weepy moment when we saw the first flush of them, there was no sky, no clouds, no fifth-wettest May in the state's history, no deciduous umbrella. There wasn't even really one of the worst wildfires to hit this patch of land in recent history, though evidence of that fire surrounded us. There were only the strange, alien edifices pushing up from a carpet of pine needles, amidst seedling plants no larger than your pinky tip.

These black weirdos were *Morchella exuberans*: dark ghosts, smoky, delectable rumors. Few in our region have seen them. Many think they don't exist. Though there were whispers of sequenced specimens from two years ago, Facebook commenters confronted with photographic evidence of them still grump about Photoshop and AI images. Still others knew they were technically possible but after a few cursory glances around areas of prescribed burn in their state each year, they set their sights out west for a surer thing, where fires are enough a part of the weather

that each significant instantiation gets a name, like a hurricane does. So this ground we trod, with its dozens of flushes of hundreds of mushrooms that may well decide not to show up for another century if it doesn't please them to do so, was rarefied indeed.

MORELS NEARLY OBLIGATE YOU TO USE THE LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE; SO BUILT UP, SO INTRICATE IN THEIR WEAVING.

The *Mochella exuberans* we collected were stunningly beautiful: greyish to coal black of cap as pins, velveteen in looks and texture when they started to expand. There is variation as they mature; some specimens showed whitish gray in their scaffolding, some stayed matte and many exhibited a soft brownness in their crags. Stipes were beigeish tan, darkening as they aged. The outlines of those furrows thinned too, so that they were less shy about the interiors of their convolutions, those little rooms. Morels in general look like highrises for insects and the fae, and my *M. exuberans.* were more oblong than the *M. americana* I'd collected with ash trees only a couple weeks prior, near the western border of the state. Those blonde numbers stand as if built on a model of alien physics, where one floor of a tower doesn't need to live on top of the other—but these darker fruit bodies were more organized and systematic looking, stacking their cups in a more orderly fashion, turning to witches' hats as they dried on the ground. Morels nearly obligate you to use the language of architecture; so built up, so intricate in their weaving.

Speaking of obligation, L and I wondered about the *Psathyrella*-like mushrooms clustering everywhere there were morels, whether they too were among those agarics that must fruit with fire? After the world contracted around our quarry, it expanded again to take in the whole carbonized scene, wick with rebounding life. There were mats of fuzzy mycelium holding the wood ash and soil together like it was their job. There was *Rhizina*, the donut fungus, an undulant ochre cup highlit at its perimeter in cream, rhizomorphs jellyfishing down. There were carpets of cups whose names mean "the earth" and "coal," ranging in hue from coral to lemon yellow, to purple, to Halloween orange, to the amber of whiskey. There was rock harlequin (*Corydalis sempervirens*) in sweet pink flower, and *Smilax* thatching itself together at the thorn, and a brilliant milk snake (*Lampropeltis*

triangulum) warning us not to get any closer to where they wound their way up a scabby elder pine. There were the dogs that had come into the woods with their people, taking in the much-changed landscape through their questing, sneezing noses. There were barely any critters at all on the morels themselves, which was a real trip given the way we'd been jockeying with slugs and ants on our hunts just two weeks before. As I cut into a fruit body with my knife, I wondered if the squirrels and deer who've spent their lives here, the ones for whom mushrooms are a dietary staple, even recognize these rarer fire fungi as food?

All that tenacious life among what at first appears to be wasted, charred ruin is what I think must have triggered the tears. Not happy tears, not sad. Just overcome. I've been accused by other students of the living world of trying to find the silver lining where there is none. I get it; so many of us don't know what a healthy forest looks like, one that has been kissed by good fire and therefore teems with diversity and resiliency, among other things, and so it seems like we're living happily during the war. But maybe this is how we survive, by continuing to love even the torched thing, reading and hearing its history, looking for echoes of its glories, then working to restore.

This is the world we have. What more is left to us than to feast when we can, to love and witness each other well, animal to animal to rock to plant to flame? What more is left to us than to paint our cheeks in tears and ash as we crawl, mushroom knives clenched in teeth, into the fight?

Maria Pinto is a Boston-area writer, mushroom enthusiast and educator. She teaches for the literary nonprofit GrubStreet, *reads fiction for* The Drum *and* Peripheries Journal *and has been awarded fellowships by the Vermont Studio Center, The Writers' Room of Boston, The Mastheads, and Garret on the Green. Her work has appeared in publications like* Frigg, Necessary Fiction, *and* Cleaver. *She sings loud whenever she passes under a bridge and, when the season's right, you can find her filling her skillet and camera roll with fungal fruiting bodies* (IG: @aravensgrace).

MORE THAN MORELS:

AN UNEXPECTED BOUNTY OF *MORCHELLACEAE* TRUFFLE DIVERSITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Truffle dogs Cricket and Rye with *Leucangium cascadiense*

BEN LEMMOND, PHD

I imagine most of us can come up with a list of fateful changes of plans brought on by COVID, some for the better, others not. In the first spring semester of my PhD studies at the University of Florida, a sudden campus lockdown scrapped my plans to start a greenhouse experiment with truffle-inoculated pecan trees.

Cross-section of *Leucangium cascadiense* (photos: Heather Dawson).

Ever vigilant against idleness, my advisor Dr. Matthew Smith very carefully delivered to my apartment a microscope and four boxes containing decades' worth of truffle collections. Somewhere in these boxes, he suggested, I might start to address some of the unresolved questions about truffles in the family *Morchellaceae*.

The family *Morchellaceae* is best known around the world for the delicious species of morel mushrooms in the genus *Morchella*. However, there are four genera of truffle-forming fungi in this family: *Fischerula*, *Imaia*, *Kalapuya* and *Leucangium*. Only one species of *Morchellaceae* truffle is what you might call well known: a single species of *Leucangium* that is highly regarded as a culinary delicacy in the Pacific Northwest. This truffle, often called the Oregon black truffle (despite occurring in California, Washington, British Columbia and perhaps elsewhere) has a warty, purple-black exterior, a powerful fruity-chocolatey aroma and a reliable association with the Douglas-fir-dominated forests that blanket this region. In our recently published study (linked here), we show that the Oregon black truffle is unique from its European counterparts such as *Leucangium carthusianum*, a name that had been misapplied to this North American taxon for decades. We designated this new North American species *Leucangium cascadiense* in honor of the Cascadia bioregion where it occurs.

A and B: *Leucangium oneidaense* (photos: Paula DeSanto); C: *Imaia kuwohiensis* (photo: Chance Noffsinger); D: *Imaia pachyascus* (photo: Ben Lemmond)

The new name is the biggest headline from the study, since it honors the regionally specific nature of this culinary truffle. But in many respects, this was our study's least surprising outcome, since preliminary data existing on GenBank already suggested a clear split between North American and European *Leucangium* species (albeit based on a limited number of samples). In casting a wide net for *Morchellaceae* truffle specimens from multiple continents, sequencing multiple DNA regions and genomes, detailed morphological study, isotopic analysis and ectomycorrhizal root-tip collections, we were able more thoroughly to fill in the picture of Morchelllaceae truffle diversity and ecology and to answer many (though not all) of the longstanding questions about this group. Some of the most interesting findings of our study have to do with the obscure truffles that turned up in this process, some of which may represent compelling cases for fungal conservation.

For example, *Imaia kuwohiensis*, named after the Cherokee place-name *Kuwohi* (known in English as Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park), is only known from one collection from the high-elevation spruce-fir forests that form "sky islands" of habitat in the southern Appalachians. All truffles are

reliant on animal dispersers and a truffle that occurs in these sky islands may also be dependent on animals unique to this habitat. One such animal is the endangered Carolina northern flying squirrel, which are notorious truffle hunters and fungivores (though no link has been documented between them and any *Imaia* species).

Some readers in the eastern U.S. may know of another culinary *Imaia* in our midst, though probably by another name: *Imaia pachyascus* is the new name we give to the North American truffle that was previously known as *Imaia gigantea*. Our analysis showed that collections from eastern North America were distinct from *Imaia gigantea* collections in Japan and a prior use of the species epithet *pachyascus* (meaning "thick ascus"—how's that for a namesake?) for North American specimens required that the name stick to the new species.

Imaia pachyascus presents some complex questions of conservation. Despite being uncommon, it *is* harvested by some commercial foragers and is steadily gaining renown as a local delicacy. Is this a bad thing? Not necessarily; the problem is that we know very little about what this fungus needs to survive, and how much impact a sustained harvest of fruiting bodies might have on the population. To be fair, it's not easy to answer that question about *any* wild-harvested fungus. However, since our thick-ascused friend was known from less than 15 or so fungarium specimens prior to our study, it might be thought of as at least uncommon and worthy of a cautious approach to harvesting (using dogs to hone in on specimens, not taking all specimens found) until more is known.

Another new species we describe from the eastern U.S. is *Leucangium oneidaense*, first reported on iNaturalist in 2019 by Paula DeSanto from a single collection in Oneida County, New York. Desanto's collection was the first *Leucangium* truffle ever reported and preserved from eastern North America. This species has only been found one other time, in Massachusetts; both collections occurred in the past six years. Rare, or just uncommon? What habitats and which dispersers are important to its survival? How large are the populations and how do they reproduce? These are not simple questions but they are getting easier to answer with the genetic-analysis tools at our disposal.

There are no mechanisms in place in the U.S. for conserving non-lichen fungi. Let's assume that developing such mechanisms is at least possible, someday—but

A delighted Dr. Ben Lemmond with Roo the Truffle Dog (photo: Jessica Griffen).

it is still very hard to manage a species when you don't know what it eats. In our paper, we showed for the first time definitive proof that some *Morchellaceae* truffles are symbiotically associated with tree hosts, meaning that they get their carbon from living plants and trade other nutrients in return. To figure this out, we worked with trained truffle dogs to find *Leucangium cascadiense* truffles. We excavated the soil around each truffle collection to harvest the Douglas-fir roots that might be sustaining this truffle and then used DNA sequencing and microscopic examination of root tips to confirm an association between truffles and the trees. We also used stable isotopes to demonstrate a consistent signature of this symbiosis among all Morchelllaceae truffle groups. Going a step further, a recent paper by Bonito et al. analyzed the genome contents of diverse *Morchellaceae* and showed that these truffles exhibit classic genomic signatures of this symbiotic ecology. With this kind of knowledge in hand, we are one step closer to understanding more about what these truffles need from their environment. There is still work to do. My hope is that more people, particularly those who are harvesting these truffles, will contribute their valuable knowledge (habitat data, fungarium specimens, iNaturalist reports) to enable us better to understand these fungal organisms' biology. I also hope that mycophiles who live in an area with some *Morchellaceae* truffles can sample some responsibly harvested truffles for themselves, thereby forming their own connection to these unique and strange delights.

2022 recipient of the NAMA/MSA Memorial Scholarship, Dr. Ben Lemmond is now a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, where he is studying ectomycorrhizal fungal ecology. His work on Morchellaceae truffles was done while he was a PhD student at the University of Florida, working with Dr. Matthew Smith. Ben is originally from Charlotte, North Carolina. He has yet to acquire a truffle dog but hopes that is in his (near) future. (benlemmond@berkeley.edu)

NAMA

Eats

Unlock the Culinary Secrets of Mushrooms and Elevate Your Gastronomic Experience

Introducing the 1,001 Mushrooms Project

ALDEN DIRKS, PHD

Reprinted by permission of the author from his website, www.AldenDirks.com

"A score of years ago I was living in the mountains of West Virginia. While riding on horseback through the dense forests of that great unfenced state, I saw on every side luxuriant growths of fungi, so inviting in color, cleanliness and flesh that it occurred to me they ought to be eaten."

Cover of Charles McIlvaine's *One Thousand American Fungi*.

So wrote Charles McIlvaine in the preface of his book entitled *One Thousand American Fungi*, published in 1900. The enduring legacy of this text is the fact that the vast majority of species have information on edibility. Some are simply listed as "esculent" while others receive more extensive descriptions. As an example, McIlvaine wrote of *Hypholoma fasciculare*:

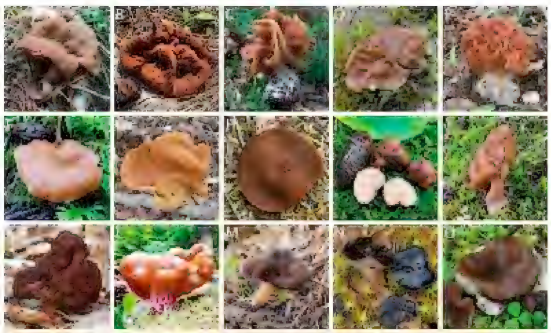
"Old authors give it as bitter and poisonous. The bitter is not always present. Any there is disappears in cooking. It is not poisonous, but one of our most valuable

Frontspiece, 1,001 American Fungi.

species. I have eaten it since 1881. A little lemon juice or sherry will cover the slightly saponaceous taste sometimes present. The caps only are good. It makes a choice pickle and a good catsup."

McIlvaine's compulsion to eat almost every fungus he found earned him the nickname "Old Iron Guts." It's truly amazing that he did not die from mushroom poisoning. While he praised *Hypholoma fasciculare* for making a choice pickle, this species has since been implicated in paralysis, vision impairment and death.

My project is a nod to *One Thousand American Fungi* and a continuation of McIlvaine's legacy: an exploration of the fantastic fungi of North America and their consumption by humans. This project is also a one-up on McIlvaine who, as a U.S. Civil War veteran, could perhaps afford a cavalier attitude towards mushroom hunting. In my journey to eating 1001 fungal species, I will follow safety guidelines (and recommend that you do as well) such as those described on the Arizona Mushroom Forum. I also hope to store vouchers and sequence the DNA of every species that I eat. This scientific rigor—unimaginable in the early 1900s—will allow for careful and tractable documentation so that as names change I can update my blog to reflect the most contemporary science.



Assortment of Gyromitra (now reorganized; see Dr. Dirks' February 25, 2025 NAMA Webinar).

Even with sequencing, you might think it impossible to eat 1,001 species of fungi. Well, consider this: in China alone there are 1,789 edible fungal species, which doesn't even include medicinal fungi. Beyond the obvious—fleshy mushrooms floating in a cream sauce and toppings on a pizza—fungi actually appear in all kinds of unexpected food products. Quorn, the producer of vegan meat

Hypholoma fasciculare (photo: Tavis Lynch)

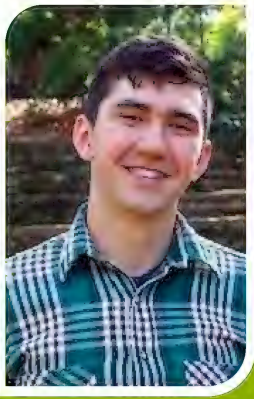
substitutes, creates its tasty vegan nuggets from *Fusarium venenatum* mycoproteins. All sorts of fermented and ripened products are created using yeasts or molds, such as cheese, sourdough bread and alcohol. Soy sauce is made with *Aspergillus oryzae*, tempeh with *Rhizopus microsporus* and furu with *Actinomucor elegans*. Combine all those foods together and you've just eaten about a dozen species of fungi (and a very strange meal)!

Hypholoma fasciculare (photo: Alden Dirks).

Maybe I've convinced you there are enough edible fungi in the world to accomplish my goal. But is there enough time? If I were to eat one new species every single day, it would take about 32 months, or something like 2.7 years. If I were to eat one new species every week, it would take almost 20 years! No doubt this project is a lifelong endeavor. I hope it brings me across the world sampling fungi that humans consume for culinary, recreational, or medicinal purposes. I think it's time I stop poking at this keyboard and find a fungus to eat.

Comment below and let me know what fungus you think I should try next!

Dr. Alden Dirks has been foraging and identifying fungi with ever-increasing enthusiasm since 2015. In 2024, he completed a PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Michigan with a thesis on the genetics and evolutionary history of the gyromitrin mycotoxin. Future installments of Dr. Dirks culinary adventures will appear in FUNGI Magazine.



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NAMA Reads

Explore Captivating Literature Dedicated to Mushrooms and Mycology.

Black Trumpets, *Craterellus cornucopioides*

GYORGYI VOROS, NAMA CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

As though soil itself had blossomed, or
as though duff had thinned and flared and risen

upward. Little craters from above, little
funnels swirling down to a grey-black depth.

Their fragrance is their music, sweet, mineral,
heady, a hint of decay, erotic as death. Invisible

even when looked upon plain, on beds of moss,
in beds of oak leaves. Seeking them, one

looks for an absence, a piece missing in the litter.
They thrive in honor of the overlooked.

They crumple. They wilt. They lie down. They
deliquesce to a black stain. They do not die.

Trompette de la morte: instruments
for the dead beneath the ground to play,

for the archangels of dirt to sound. Their
unheard fanfares rise in praise. They trumpet:

We're here. We're here. We're here. Just one
of the multitudes you never notice, never see.

Mycocosmic by Lesley Wheeler

BOOK REVIEW BY MAYA HAN

Tupelo Press, 2025
92 pages
ISBN-10: 1961209160
ISBN-13: 978-1961209169

Lesley Wheeler's sixth collection of poetry, *Mycocosmic*, is a dazzling, incantatory offering of "intricately woven spell-poems—prayers, hexes, charms, and invocations."[1] Drawing inspiration from the mycological world and, more specifically, the mycelial underworld, the poems are a lyrical call for transformation as they come to terms with buried family violence and trauma, surfacing anxieties about aging and loss, and grappling with identity, sexuality, love and death.

Both death and fungi are emblems of literal decay and figurative transformation. Perhaps that is why the two are often linked in the cultural imagination, most notably in the fungal body horror genre. Death—that of Wheeler's mother—was the impetus for *Mycocosmic* and lies at its emotional core, but the author eschews the horrific for the lyric, oneiric and irenic. When I asked Wheeler about the inspiration behind her interest in the fungal, she revealed the following:

> *"I've found mushrooms mysterious and fascinating since childhood, when I found them in fairy stories my English mother shared. As a teacher of literary modernism, too, I knew about John Cage's interest in fungi. [...] Around 2021, I was drafting poems about grief and fungi, having no idea why they were converging. Then it hit me: mycelium not only connects so many beings, but it metabolizes death, as I needed to do. That's when I started reading about the subject more widely and deeply, building the "underpoem" that runs through the pages of Mycocosmic out of what I found. I'm no expert, but the work of mycelium moves me and I'm continuing to study and explore the subject."*

My initial reaction to learning of this "poetic mycelium" running beneath each poem was skepticism, anticipating something contrived and choppy à la exquisite-

corpse-style writing. To the reader's delight, what unfolds is indeed exquisite—an 'underground' unfurling, "sending tendrils across the footer of each page" with haiku-like flashes of beauty, titillating like a freeverse striptease. The "underpoem" adds heft and depth to the 'upper-verse,' like the *cantus firmus* in Gregorian chant and early polyphony.

Sometimes the book's references to the mycological are more overt, as in the rousing opener, "We Could Be" and later, in one of my favorite pieces, the stunning "Dark Energy." At other times the references are more allegorical, as in the lullingly hypnotic last poem, "Return Path."

We Could Be

mycelial, eating toxins together,
decomposing what's still indigestible
about this place. The singed taste.
Could spread our soiled hands wide,
vegetate, infiltrate, collaborate.
Below ground, we could grow
fat on loss, bust out in the wildest
shapes. Puffball. Flagellate.
Our mistakes gorgeous in dispersal
across polluted skies. Help me try.

—Lesley Wheeler

(poem reprinted courtesy of the author; more info at lesleywheeler.org/@LesleyMWheeler)

The fantastical and rather unsettling cover image—a delicate rendering of a mushroom (presumably an *Amanita* species) hovering in the air—evokes the sense of both the *unearthing* of the subterranean and the *untethering* of the terrestrial—the existential 'lightness of being' to which anyone who has worked through trauma can attest. In most of the poems, in some fashion or other, there are images of pushing up from the mycelial underworld, often, as in "Leonids," expanding beyond to embrace the "cosmic" of the book's title.

All the poems, whether focusing on the mycological or not, incorporate the natural world and readers of 'nature poetry' may hear a quiet echo or two of Mary Oliver; allusions to earth are as rich and loamy as a Seamus Heaney line; the clarion call of the feminist and modernist canons urgently ring through. Wheeler's literary genealogy is expansive but her works are acts of creative transcendence, producing a gorgeous and enthralling collection in a voice resoundingly her own. Mycophiles will find delight and discovery in the bold, new ways of perceiving the fungal realms above and below—marvelously rendered not by the camera's lens but deep in the mind's eye.

Maya Han is the Cultural Coordinator of New York Mycological Society (NYMS), *where she founded the Myco Book Club and Myco Film Festival. She is an avid gardener, mycophile, artist, writer and filmmaker based in Brooklyn, NY. If you have an idea for a mycocultural collaboration, please reach out to her at culture@newyorkmyc.org.*

Photo(s): Kristen and Trent Blizzard

To Peel, or Not To Peel

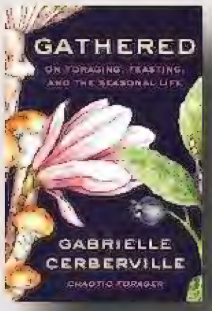
JOE BRANDT, NAMA CLUB RELATIONS COMMITTEE
PRESIDENT, CONNECTICUT-WESTCHESTER
MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (COMA)

For the umpteenth time, while preparing a new batch of boletes for cooking, I was once again faced with the age-old dilemma of peeling or not peeling the pores and I thought: "What would Hamlet say?" I suppose it would have gone something like this:

To peel, or not to peel? *That* is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mouth to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous flavor,
Or to take up knife against pores,
And by opposing, end them? To taste, to savor,
No more; and by tasting to say we end
The endless debate; and a thousand other questions
Form in our minds regarding its consummation
Devoutly to be enjoyed. To savor, in a meal;
To eat, perchance for dinner—aye, there's the rub:
For in that mycofantasy meal, what dreams may come,
When we have extra-virgined the olive oil,
Which must give us flavor—there's the respect
That makes no calamity of so fine a meal.
The judgement may be wrong,
Our eyes may deceive us,
The patient merit of sparing the blade,
When bugs may linger below the surface?
Shall we bare the flesh, cast off the pores?
But that the dread of something underneath
The undiscovered critters who may lurketh,
Absorbing quietly the fine-flavored oil,
No epicurean palate will solve the puzzle –
But the fear of that which lays concealed still
Consumed by others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus, the native hue of resolution
Is weakened by the thought of what may be hiding
To leap, unbridled into our imagination,
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard these pores do linger,
And we lose the name of action. Soft you now,
The fair bolete! Heaven in my dinner!
Be all my meals remembered.

Gathered: On Foraging, Feasting, and the Seasonal Life by Gabrielle Cerberville illustrated by Madison Memering

BOOK REVIEW BY GORDON WALKER, PHD, NAMA CULINARY ARTS COMMITTEE



Harper Collins, 2025
368 pages
$32.00 USD
ISBN-10: 0063357917
ISBN-13: 978-0063357914

Gathered is a mixture of remarkably well-written personal stories, philosophical reflections, practical foraging advice and solid seasonal recipes from Gabrielle Cerberville, better known as "the Internet's Mushroom Auntie" and @chaoticforager on social media. Cerberville is an accomplished artist, forager, educator, chef and content creator. She is also working on her PhD at the University of Virginia in the Music Composition and Computer Technologies program. For me personally, she has been a constant source of inspiration since I first ran across her content online back in 2020. She has an unique ability to combine her encyclopedic knowledge of the natural world with engaging storytelling, presented in her signature relaxed down-home "auntie" style.

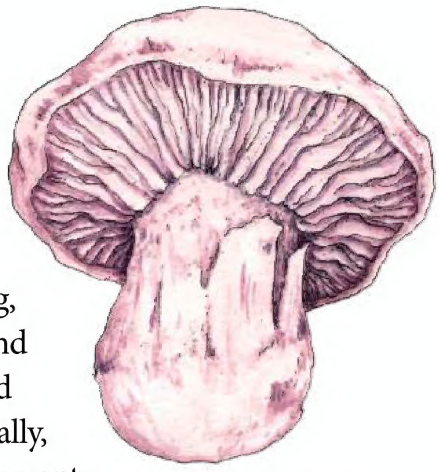
As with any good cookbook, this one starts with a review of gear, including what stuff is necessary to bring into the field for foraging as well as what equipment one needs in the kitchen to prepare and preserve foraged finds. The chapters are loosely organized around seasons, starting with winter and running through spring and summer into fall, with evocative names like "The Stillness," "To Be A Flower, Is Profound" and "Of Gold and Red." Chapters feature memories spanning from the author's adult life spent across the Midwest and stretch back to her childhood in pastoral Pennsylvania, to time spent abroad in Panama. For Cerberville, these remembrances are inexorably linked to impactful seasonal experiences with edible plants and mushrooms.The end of each chapter features a short set of mindfulness exercises and a collection of recipes featuring the specific plants and mushrooms mentioned.

I went into reading this book expecting some stellar recipes; what I wasn't expecting was an incredibly profound and moving memoir. Each collection of anecdotes and self-reflections is unified around aspects of the natural world, conveying not just pragmatic advice about foraging but also highlighting deeply personal moments that speak to the author's motivations and character. Cerberville very successfully combines the knowledge and poetic lyricism of Merlin Sheldrake's *Entangled Life* with the ethical framework of the Honorable Harvest laid out by Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass*. The compelling narratives about nature draw you into the experience with sensory information about the looks, feels and scents of plants and mushrooms that assist with recognition and identification, aided by the multitude of detailed illustrations and color photos.

The moving memories made quite the impression on me but so did the organization and flow of the recipes in the book. Similar to her social media, Cerberville's writing is clear, concise and accurate while still feeling cozily colloquial. Reading the recipes feels like you have the author in your kitchen, giving you advice (but not exacting commands) about how to make her recipe into a dish personalized for your preferences. In many cases she presents a framework for the recipe, with suggestions for substitutions or modifications to fit your dietary needs and what you have available. This flexibility allows many of the recipes and techniques featured to be applied in any season, depending on what you can find at the time.

Cerberville draws upon many different aspects of her cultural heritage and life experience in her recipes, giving a nod to her Puerto Rican roots with her Wildcrafted Sofrito and The Rice, a holiday staple in her household. I did not have the time or ingredients to test these recipes extensively but over the years I have sampled many of her creations and am regularly blown away by her creativity and acumen for highlighting the unique flavors of foraged foods through techniques like fermentation and preservation. Some of my favorite recipes featured in *Gathered* are Miso Soup with Enoki Mushrooms, Lacto-Fermented Garlic Mustard Pesto, Black Walnut Hummus, Fried Oyster Mushroom Sandwich with

Smashed Blackberries, Giant Puffball Pizza, Mugolio (pinecone jam), Chanterelle Peach Pie with Basil, Indigo Milkcap Ice Cream, and Spicebush Shortbread.



Collybia nuda by Madison Memering

The recipes span the full spectrum of savory to sweet and from easy to more complicated. Preservation and processing techniques include dehydration, lactic-acid fermentation, sugar syrups/candying, botanical/alcohol infusions, burning/smoking, leeching of tannins and more. The recipes are easy to read and I am confident that if I followed the instructions as written I would achieve fantastic results. Additionally, many of these recipes are featured as videos on @chaoticforager if you want to get a glimpse of the author's process and see how her dishes turn out.

The end of the book features a detailed glossary of all the plants and fungi mentioned with key morphological traits and notable identifying features, along with information on the season, habitat and growing conditions. The plants and mushrooms featured in this book are most relevant for folks in the Upper Midwest and Eastern Seaboard but most of the advice and recipes will be applicable anywhere.

Overall, I am extremely impressed by the storytelling, perspectives, accuracy of information and clarity of instructions in *Gathered*. Much like Cerberville, this book is both hard and soft; indicative of her pragmatic no-nonsense upbringing, time spent running carefree barefoot among the wildflowers, trudging through snow and self-doubt in the middle of winter, demonstrating her devotion to the land and respect for nature, all while forging her own path forward in life. *Gathered* seamlessly integrates the many facets of foraging, including responsible stewardship, cooking and preservation into a touching collection of stories that will keep you turning the pages, taking notes and inspiring you to get outside. Filled with a mountain of metaphors and salacious similes, this is a fun, informative and thought-provoking read.

Dr. Gordon Walker is originally from Cambridge, MA. He attended UC Santa Cruz, obtaining a B.S. in Biochemistry. He then attended UC Davis, where he completed his Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He also completed postdoctoral work on fermentation process control at UC Davis. Besides his passion for all things fungi and fermentation, he is an avid chef, forager, sailor, SCUBA diver and gardener.

NAMA Crossword

BRUCH REED, COO/*MQ* ED., WITH LAYOUT ARTIST CHRIS ROSS

All answers to this crossword are contained within this *MQ* edition to challenge and reflect the attentiveness and attention with which you rockstars read!

Clues on the next page

July-August-September 2025 NAMA Crossword

BRUCH REED, COO/*MQ* ED., WITH LAYOUT ARTIST CHRIS ROSS

Across

1 sticky earthtongues
4 Floridian *Ganoderma*
7 such stuff as Brenden Erickson's dreams are made on
10 we all join this Mycological Club sometime
11 Thomann had never been
13 relating to dreams
16 UK's National Dish, NAMA Scholarship benefactor
18 "Clingman's Dome," aka
19 morels not fire-triggered
20 K^2CO^3 or our 2025 Hill
21 Cerberville's and Bad Bunny's roots
32 rough shot or famous truffle-pup
33 presumable *Mycocosmic* cover genus
34 nonpuzzle-solving palate
35 paradoxically edible but redlisted Florida genus
36 this game needs a kickstart
40 Eastern burn-morel *Pinus*
42 Rosenberger's big fuzzy dog
43 Florida county named for proud Indigenous survivors
44 on IG with 'Forager,' *Gathered* author
46 time Brandt has prepared porcini
47 do you peel these?
48 you couldn't lock in this New Yorker
49 makes cowards of us all

Down

2 earthtongues with little hairs
3 Lemmond advisor
5 with the goal of peace
6 Halloween-y genus
8 our kind of network
9 IMA treasurer surname
10 2-named
12 pinecone jam, aka
14 *nuda* no longer in *Clitocybe*
15 Hodge fell for mushrooms in _____
17 class of "algal fungi," now obsolete
22 Be all Brandt's meals
23 Mingan is a protected Canadian
24 *Geoglossum* is one genus of
25 Han says Wheeler alludes to this Mary
26 even light, it can tip the Florida balance
27 all truffles rely on animal _____
28 Sheldrake's *Life*
29 *Imaia* be thick
30 Dr. Walker's, *to Kingdom Fungi*
31 Lebeuf recognized this *Cordyceps*
37 common black truffle with one state's name
38 the donut fungus
39 McCalden hunts mushrooms and _____
41 'black gum' or a Press
45 metal of McIlvaine innards

Answer Key for April–May–June 2025 NAMA Crossword

BRUCH REED, COO/*MQ* ED., WITH LAYOUT ARTIST CHRIS ROSS

Across

1 yellow-staining *Lactarius* epithet—***xanthogalactus***
5 Sally's response to "goldens"—**guttural**
6 Layton recently saw them fruit before morels—**shaggymanes**
8 of *The Mushroom Hunters*—**Cook**
10 Kurt's classes are more—**fungicentric**
11 Olly's hill-tree genus—***Quercus***
14 it strikes back—**nanopore**
15 number of American fungi in seminal 1900 tome—**thousand**
19 is brown rot this 3D artform?—**woodworking**
21 2026 secret Regional Foray location—**Canada**
22 NAMA Oregon Dunes quarry—**matsutake**
26 Slortz inspires *Time to*—***Reflect***
28 trailhead of a new *Psathyrella*—**Silverdale**
31 Sumodi's Spores' *Creek*—**Sapphire**
33 salty salties-continent condiment—**Vegemite**
34 Martin's Mushroom ___—**Marker**
37 Gold Rush locus or creamy bar—**Klondike**
38 marrow, spleen and liver-affecting disorder—**Gaucher**
39 in Manitoba, a mycophile goes—**fortaging**
42 *Inonotus obliquus*—**chaga**
44 like mushroom knowledge, they stack up—**pancakes**
45 an image of it graced the last 2025 *MQ* cover—**Decay**
46 Ozempic is a GLP-1—**agonist**
47 Florence's Best—**Western**
48 NJMA UV enthusiast—**Hunt**
49 Biblically surnamed *McIlvainea* author, sans -ite—**Canan**

Down

2 "NAMA" is one—**acronym**
3 growing or living on wood—**lignicolous**
4 they "want some more" [Instagram followers]—**Oliver**
7 unwanted MycoBlitz mushroom—**shiitake**
9 from *McIlvainea* to *FUNGI Mag*—**Bunyard**
12 Zachary Hunter, or one who only eats mushrooms—**Fungivore**
13 "sacred hand" epithet—***manus-buddhae***
16 usually, "to remove an acetyl group"—**deacetylate**
17 welcomed Manitoba club's first foray—**rainbow**
18 shared state of mutual benefit—**symbiosis**
20 storied avian noir and/or wonderwife—**Raven**
23 Tupac's beloved hills—**Althadena**
24 "Old Iron-Guts"—**McIlvaine**
25 gold-haired gal or morel—**blonde**
27 relatable hero, with Olly—**Ember**
28 it's always 5 o'clock or mushroom season—**somewhere**
29 *Chopped*-style nut—**pistachio**
30 mushroom-digesting enzyme—**chitinase**
32 carry your canoe—**portage**
34 Winnipeg is capital—**Manitoba**
35 *Friends* friend, or NAMA New England logoer—**Ross**
36 soft mushroom sculptures—**felted**
39 Rocky Mountains field-guide publisher—**Falcon**
40 eagle-monikered scholarships—**Aquilla**
41 beer, spice or new Chair—**Ginger**
43 this Creative makes ya jump! jump!—**Cross**